The Unitarian Christian

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Purpose: To preserve and strengthen the Christian essence of Unitarianism

EDITORIAL

When we read our earliest Resurrection Story in the fifteenth chapter of Paul's first Epistle to the Corinthians, we are struck by its simplicity and entire lack of detail. When we compare it with our last Resurrection Story in the two concluding chapters of the Gospel of John, its length, its confidence of statement, its wealth of detail, we can understand why scholars are so troubled by this contrast. If the story tells the facts why did not Paul know them and tell them? But if the story, by a perfectly natural process, has gathered its own form and length and circumstantial detail, what reliance can we put in the facts it claims to relate? It was told thousands of times, by friend to friend, by parents to children; and in each telling it picked up a bit of embellishment, as stories always do.

But why should anyone, even scholars, be troubled? Here was a man whose like the world had never seen: so vividly aware of God; so passionate in his sympathy; so clean and selfless in thought and act and intent. The noblest trait in the human heart is its refusal to relinquish such a man. He is too sorely needed, and too gratefully loved. A Resurrection Story, or its equivalent, is as certain to follow such a life as May flowers are certain to follow April showers. Prince Gautama still lives in his Bodisats or re-incarnations. Frederick Barbarossa, "that magnificent magnanimous man", is not dead but only asleep in his mountain cave, waiting for the moment when the world shall need him again. And "Abraham Lincoln walks at midnight in Springfield, Illinois."

With due understanding, we may count ourselves fortunate in our Resurrection Story. The purest powers of man's soul have gone into its fabrication; the tenderest love, the loftiest aspiration, the clearest spiritual insight. They have touched it with a beauty that is its own justification: "Abide with us, for it is toward evening and the day is far spent". "He took bread and blessed it, and brake it, and gave to them. And their eyes were opened, and they knew him." "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world."

C. E. P.

The Fatherhood of God.
The Brotherhood of Man.
The Leadership of Jesus.
Salvation by Character.
The Progress of Mankind,
Onward and Upward Forever

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The First Easter Morning

As the story in Mark's Gospel was first read in English: translated by John Wycliffe A. D. 1382. Mark 16:1-8

And whanne the sabat was passid, Marie Maudeleyne and Marie of James and Salomee boughten swete smellynge oynementis, to come and anoynte Jhesu. And ful eerli in oon of the woke daies, thei camen to the sepulcre, whanne the sunne was risun. And thei seiden togidere, Who schal meue awey to vs the stoon fro the dore of the sepulcre? And thei bihelden, seien the stoon walewid awei, for it was ful greet. And thei yeden in to the sepulcre, and sayn a yonglyng, hilide with a white stole, sittynge at the riythalf; and thei weren afeerd.

Which seith to hem, Nyle ye drede: Ye seken Jhesu of Nazareth crucified: he is risun, he is not here: lo! the place where thei leiden hym. But go ye, and seie ye to hise disciplis, and to Petir, that he schal go bifor you into Galilee; there ye schulen se hym, as he seide to you. And thei yeden out, and fledden fro the sepulcre; for drede and quakyng had assailed hem, and to no man thei seiden ony thing, for thei dredden.

AN INTERPRETATION

In our Christmas issue, in 1953, of our *Unitarian Christian*, we printed The Christmas Story as it is found in John Wycliffe's translation of the Bible in 1382. In an interpretation of that story it was pointed out that Wycliffe defied the authority of the Church of Rome in making that translation, and putting it into the hands of the people of England.

Here we present Wycliffe's translation of the story of The First Easter Morning from the Gospel of Mark.

Upon the minds of the English people these stories, and others, came down like refreshing showers on an unwatered garden. Christ had been only a shadowy figure quite detached from human living. Wycliffe brought his people face to face with the living Master. And the Master became, to them, dynamic, vivid, and intensely human.

Of the four Gospels, that by Mark was the first to be written, and it was written many years after the death of Jesus. It is brief — it can be read in about an hour. As we read this Easter story in Wycliffe's quaint words, or as we read it in a familiar version, we come to an abrupt statement that the devoted friends of Jesus fled from the empty tomb in which the body of Jesus had been laid; and that they fled in fear.

All that we have of Mark's original Gospel ends there. The remainder of this sixteenth chapter — the last chapter — is written to fill the place of the lost ending of the Gospel. But well may we meditate on the story in these few verses. The writer of Luke's Gospel had Mark's Gospel as a guide.

Both Gospels tell of a little group of women, who were devoted believers in Jesus, coming to the tomb with spices to do a last act of reverence for the dead body of their Master. Luke represents an angel as saying to them, "Why seek ye the living among the dead?" The question is highly significant.

The question may be amplified, and thereby clarified. Let us put it into these words: Why do you come to a tomb to find the living spirit of your Master? Why did you imagine that all that is left of him is his mutilated body? Why such concern for the body, which can die, instead of fellowship with his Immortal Being?

On that first Easter morning, and in the days which followed, the disciples of the Master did enter into the experience of fellowship with him.

AN EASTER PRAYER

Almighty God, our Heavenly Father, we pray for a living faith in him who brought immortality to light. Even now, in this earthly life, grant that we attain unto the higher life, which is the life eternal. Grant us the power of vision that we may behold the everlasting realities of life. Quicken our hearing that we may listen to the Voice which speaks in silence and be guided in that path of life which has no end. In the faith that thy love is from everlasting to everlasting we make our prayer. Amen.

THE EASTER QUESTION

By Rev. Robert A. Storer, Minister, The Unitarian Society, Winchester, Mass.

Statistics prove that Easter Sunday Morning is the most attractive Sunday in the Church year. The one important reason is that Easter is a reassuring day. It declares that the greatest mystery in life is not an evil. It is not something to fear. It is not final.

Everyone is interested in the subject. Somehow we need to cultivate the faith that human life is not something that lasts usually less than a century, then passes away and is nothing.

If only one could say for sure what lies beyond this life; what heaven is like, with its golden gates and streets, the music and the harmony that prevail there! Those who believe that they will be reunited in a physical way with members of their families could tell of the joy one experiences in embracing once more a long-lost loved one. But at least we can take seriously the Christian teaching that heaven is not meat and drink; in heaven there are no marriages; in heaven the body does not exist.

What actually lies beyond we cannot say. Some of us have our own satisfying idea about the rebirth of the human soul in other forms, in a later period. Thus far in our development this thought appeals to us. It does have some practical value in helping us face this day. We, each one of us, have our strong faiths, our large hopes, our vivid imaginations. They are sacred to us, and they help us. But we must know that no other human being can give us final proof. The answer is with God.

It satisfies us to know that there is a continuance. We cannot see, in a universe where nothing is wasted, and where man is capable of such noble action and affection, how a human life can be limited to a few years. What the next life is we are willing to leave till the time comes. With Carlyle we agree that one world at a time is enough. "Our main business is, not to see what lies dimly at a distance, but to do what lies clearly at hand."

For us this means to live as though the perfect world, the Kingdom, had arrived; to treat each moment as the most precious, each person we meet as the most wonderful; to recognize that we do not have to wait for another life to receive our rewards, or to make improvements. We have talked with people who have said: "Maybe I do put up with more than I should. But I can endure th injustices of my present condition because I know that I will be happier hereafter, when heaven wil be mine." This is thin ice. How wrong for us t submit to things that ought not to be tolerated, t accept misery and pain and ugliness in humar living, because of our misconception that this lif has to be a cross, and our hope that the next lif will have a musical accompaniment.

Here is a modern illustration: A man was weed ing his garden when his neighbor stopped for a few words. He asked the gardener what he woul do if he knew that the rest of the day was all he had to live. The gardener stopped for a second and replied: "Id keep right on weeding."

This is our Easter message: Heaven may or may not be a future condition. But of this we are sure it is a present condition. We must keep right o removing weeds; we must continue living as thoug this moment we are now drawing breath is th only heaven we will know.

On this day we have, each one of us, in o thoughts, memories of those who while they liv showed us a glimpse of heaven. We can share th immortality. We can give them permanence. We ca give them eternal life, by keeping their torch ligh ed. Perhaps we have all had such wonderful e amples in our own lives: some dear friend wh made us realize the folly of retaliation; who ne knew what it meant to get even, or to pay back; wh believed in people; who never felt called upon return an insult; with whom anger never stay Such an influence is indestructible because it the greatest truth: "Love conquers all." Think of such a friend we are reminded of the most assuring words in our sacred writings: "God ha made everything beautiful in His time. Nothi can be put to it, nor anything taken from it."

MORE UNITARIANS

ARE READING THE

UNITARIAN CHRISTIAN!

AN EASTER MESSAGE

By Rev. Richard Huff, Minister, First Congregational Society (Unitarian), New Bedford, Mass.

Even the longest life never really seems complete. As the twilight years come, we always wish that our lives could have been more neatly lived. The great artist Raphael was so impressed with this incomplete aspect of life that when he painted the picture of Christ setting a crown on his mother's head, the lower left-hand corner of the picture was unfinished, a symbol of the unfinished part of every life, including the life of the artist and his attempt to record on canvass life as he saw it.

On Easter morning we would like to have a perfect example of a finished life in Jesus. It is a pretty picture, and a great one, but like all others it has its phase of incompleteness. He did say: "I have finished the task that thou gavest me to do." This was true. He lived up to his ideals; up to his divinely prompted conscience. He had a message and a work on his soul that he finished creditably. But no reasonable person could say that Jesus really finished his life. He showed great promise, and actually reached a high peak of performance; but how did he die? He was deliberately killed by his enemies at the age of thirty-three. Could a life terminated in such a violent manner be considered finished? It could not.

Here is the most neglected text in the Bible: "Truly, truly, I say unto you, he who believes in me will also do the works that I do; and greater works than these will he do, because I go to my Father." The first part of this passage is bad enough for the average Christian. For it says that Jesus is expecting his followers to actually do the same things that he did. This thought is horrifying. Most people have pushed the text aside. But this is only the first part. The last part is even more a blast of dynamite to the smugness of our modern Christians.

"Greater works than these will he do." Here it is right from the lips of Jesus. He not only expected his followers to duplicate his life, he expected them to go far beyond him in performance. I have done these things in a little matter of thirty-three years, said Jesus in effect, and you are going to live longer than this. Therefore I expect you to do much greater works than these you have seen me do. We have to admit that the life of Jesus had the same quality common to all of us. He, too, lived an unfinished life.

If this is true of Jesus, where does it leave us? In the same boat, and face to face with one of life's hardest lessons: that nothing on this earth is a finished product. No man is ever the full man that God intended him to be. No flower ever reaches the perfect pattern, although the flowers come nearer than man. Each beautiful flower speaks to the mind and soul of man to match its beauty, and come up to its standards of perfection. But life is cut short in every area that we look. Death comes to all forms of life, early or late.

Henry Francis Lyte in 1847 was impressed with this phase of life and wrote these words in the familiar hymn "Abide With Me":

> "Swift to its close ebbs out life's little day:
> Earth's joys grow dim, its glories pass away:
> Change and decay in all around I see:
> O thou who changest not, abide with me!"

And so Francis Lyte hit upon one of the answers to man's restless soul, his longing after wholeness, his hunger for perfection, his sense of sadness at his own unfulfilled aspirations. For when this hard lesson is learned, the lesson that life's fullness always eludes our grasp, a man's spiritual antennas go out in every direction in search of inner security, and one by one we find peace in God.

St. Augustine knew this in the fourth century, when he found the answer to the turbulent forces in his own heart, and wrote in his "Confessions": "Thou has made us for thyself and our souls are restless till they find their rest in Thee."

The old fisherman knew this when he lifted his voice in the storm with this ancient prayer:

> "O God, thy sea is so great and my boat is so small."

Every man, from fisherman to saint, needs this inner security to replace the continuing feeling of incompleteness from which we find it so difficult to escape.

A small earthworm, one of the lowest and simplest of organisms, is content to burrow in the ground, but man is not. A snake burrows into the

ground also, but he will not stay there. He likes to race in the open air and feel the warmth of the sun on his back as he lies upon a rock in peace and quiet. A bird seldom makes its home on the ground, much less under it, and is never at home until it is in the air. Every instinct in the bird gently urges it toward the open skies. As you see, each form of living thing upon the earth finds it more and more difficult to find contentment and peace in the lower regions of life. The higher forms of life are never content to retrograde toward some lower type of experience.

And so a man does not find peace living like a beast. He never will be free of his restlessness if he tries the downgrade slide. As Jesus said, "Go in at the narrow gate. For the road that leads to destruction is broad and spacious, and there are many who go in by it. But the gate is narrow and the road hard that leads to life, and there are few that find it." This road is our road. Leave the earthworm to his home in the earth. Man must follow the road to life.

No one of us can return to the dust from which we came and be happy. We have come a long way since we first staggered out of the slime of the forest primeval and we can never go back along this road. We have to go forward. The road is steeper all the way and the answers come harder, but there is no other way for us to go. Life may become more and more complicated than we now know it. The whole process of living is being speeded up and more and more complex becomes our world and our people. We may see a day when a man lives as much in a week as most of us live in a year.

Therefore, one of the paramount issues of our day is the road that leads to peace of heart, peace of mind, peace of soul. Every word that is written on this subject is eagerly devoured by the public.

It is my opinion that this peace comes in many ways, but certainly when we begin to approach our God. As we start to feel the highest forces and powers within us, our confidence is renewed. Our morale begins to soar, our spirit starts to come alive again as never before.

Could it be that this unfinished aspect of life, this feeling that we are never over, that we are never finished is a prelude to a much higher feeling? Could it be that this life never seems complete, because it really is only a part of the life we some day will know? Maybe these restless feelings are like the stirrings of nature within the mind of the little bird as it is being urged into the open air. Maybe life seems unfinished because it is not over, perhaps only briefly started during the years we call our lifetime. If so, we have so much to look forward to. I think so, but is is hard to think so. I feel so, and this is the feeling of every human being who ever lived. Death need have no terrors if we have a chance to complete our life later. Separation need not distress us if we are only away for a season. Failures need not condemn us if we will continue in another world.

Realizing all this, the words of Jesus take on fresh meaning when he says: "Let not your hearts be troubled; believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you. And when I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also. And you know the way I am going."

To

Mrs. Lizzie York Case

Who lit the lost world's darkness, doubt and grief
With truth's own song: "There is no unbelief".

UNBELIEF

There is no unbelief;
Whoever plants a seed beneath the sod
And waits to see it push away the clod,
He trusts in God.
Whoever says, when clouds are in the sky:
Be patient, heart; light breaketh by and by
Trusts the Most High.
Whoever sees, 'neath winter's field of snow
The silver harvest of the future grow,
God's power must know.
Whoever says: "Tomorrow", "The Unknown",
"The Future",
Trusts the Power alone
He dares disown.
The heart that looks on when the eyelids close,
And dares to live, when life has woes,
God's comfort knows.
There is no unbelief;
And day by day, unconsciously,
The heart lives by the faith the lips deny;
God knoweth why.

— *Contributed*

RATIONAL THEOLOGY

By Rev. Rowland Gray-Smith, Ph.D., Minister, Third Congregational Society (Unitarian)
Hingham, Mass.

By religion I mean the experience of God. At any rate this I take to be religion's primary meaning. Religion has to do with the association of the divine mind with the human mind. It is the spiritual discernment of spiritual things. This discernment is the basic experience which constitutes religion.

Among the thinkers who uphold "naturalistic humanism" there has been some discussion as to the propriety of calling humanism a religion. Leaders of ethical culture societies have usually eschewed the name of ministers of religion. Those who call themselves humanists seldom espouse atheism, but they repeatedly say that all uncritical references to the deity should be avoided in their meetings. They sometimes say that religion itself should be purged of all reference to deity. Religion, they say, should concentrate on human fellowship and welfare. But any plain person, I think, would question whether the word "religion" is properly used for an attempt to rid one's words of all reference to a supreme being, for it is this which is the distinguishing mark of religion as everywhere practiced. And as for concentrating on human welfare, the belief in a supreme being has done more for human welfare than anything else whatever.

Religion is the experience of God. In saying that we are taking the existence of God for granted. This is what religion normally does. No religion has ever been founded upon a philosophical discussion as to whether God exists or not. Always the practical experience comes first. There is an acquaintance with one "in whose hand," as Job puts it, "is the soul of every living thing, and the spirit of all mankind," one in whom, as Paul puts it, all men "live and move and have their being." This acquaintance with the divine is the raw material out of which religion has been made. The great names in the history of religion have been the men and women most deeply moved by their inner experience of the divine.

Having said that, I must add that I have a great deal of sympathy with those who subject religion to intellectual investigation. This investigation, or the branch of it we are here concerned with, may be called "rational theology." Rational theology deals with the all-important question of the existence and nature of God. Can it be proved that God exists and how must he be rationally conceived?

We must bear in mind that rational theology deals only with ideas. Its arguments may show that belief in God is as intellectually respectable as atheism, and so confirm people in their religious experience. They may indicate how people who use their reason in religion will conceive of God. But they never by themselves will make people religious.

There are seven arguments that may well become the stock-in-trade of rational theology, seven so-called "proofs" of the existence of God. The first two have to do directly with the existence of the world, and the remaining five deal more directly with our mental make-up.

1) How, it is urged, could anything exist without being made? The world exists, therefor it had a maker. This sounds reasonable enough until we say that if the maker of the world exists, and anything that exists has a maker, then the maker of the world must have had a maker, and so on *ad infinitum*.

The occidental mind has as little love for an infinite regress as the oriental mind has for an endless round of rebirths. So to avoid going back for ever, the mind evolves the idea of an uncaused cause, a self-existing being. In contrast to that self-existing being the world is thought of as dependent and contingent, and the self-existing being *per contra*, is thought of as an unchanging one.

2) Perhaps more impressive than that is the argument which concludes that the world is the work of an intelligent designer. Certainly the order within the world is remarkable and the ingenuity with which things are made, especially the human brain with its capacity to contribute mechanical "brains", is far beyond any cleverness possessed by man. So we are led to the idea of the world as involving the operation of a wonderful intelligence.

3) Arguments based upon our own mental operations are, perhaps, more impressive still. To begin with, human beings are able to reason, and when

they do so, they all reason in the same way. For instance, everyone agrees that things equal to the same thing are equal to one another; it would be impossible to teach anyone that that is not so. This fact of a rationality common to all men has led to the idea of a universal reason operating in every human mind.

4) Another argument concentrates on the fact that among our ideas we find the idea of a perfect being. And since it is assumed that a perfect being who existed would be more perfect than one who did not exist, it has been concluded that the very idea of a perfect being entails the idea of the existence of a perfect being; some, in fact, say it entails its actual existence.

5) Not as subtle as that is the argument from our moral consciousness. Conscience has often been called the voice of God. It is also nowadays often called the voice of society. But individuals sometimes say a thing is wrong although they do not believe that society says it is wrong. And we often say something might be better than it is, though the betterness in question has never existed except as an ideal. This capacity of man for forming moral ideals leads to the idea of a divine being as the source of it.

6) There are two remaining arguments for the existence of God which, though less common, I happen to think most highly of. The first is based upon the relativity of all human knowledge. That all knowledge is initially relative is a commonplace of science. But if we cannot get rid of that relativity there could be no science, for science is systematic knowledge, aiming to express its formulas in a form that would be true for all minds. Science assumes that a mind which could combine all possible points of view in itself would be in possession of absolute truth, and without that assumption the whole scientific enterprise would not make sense. So we are led to the idea of a mind that knows everything.

7) Finally, there is an argument that can be put quite simply. It is based on the fact that whatever anyone desires, he implies the desire for the power to get it. And how much power is that? Take the simple desire to eat your next meal. Theoretically all kinds of things may prevent you from fulfilling that desire. There might be an accident, a death, a hurricane, or even an earthquake or volcanic eruption. How much power would you have to have at your disposal to make absolutely certain the satisfaction of the most ordinary desire? Only some vastly superhuman power could guarantee it beyond a peradventure. So about your next meal you cannot say that you shall eat it; but you can say you shall, *God willing*.

Such a rapid survey of rational theology's seven arguments for the existence of God does justice to none of them. My apology for setting them down so briefly is that it enables us to generalize about them. What is it that they prove? Do they prove that God exists? My own feeling is that they prove only that certain ideas exist, and exist unavoidably.

To summarize: the existence of the changing world suggests the idea of its subsistence in an unchanging self-existing being; the order and ingenuity of adjustment among existing things suggest the idea of an intelligent designer; the existence of norms for all human reasoning suggests that man's mind is a partaker of a universal reason; the idea of a perfect being suggests that a perfect being exists; the fact of unrealized social ideals suggests a transcendent source of human morality; the systematization of knowledge in science presupposes confidence in a point of view beyond the relativity of any human observer, an ideal of completed knowledge; every act of human will contains an implied appeal to a power able to guarantee the attainment of what is willed. Some of these seven ideas of "God" not only exist, but they *must* exist to make sense of human experience; they are *necessary* ideas.

All that is simply to show how far human reason can go. Rational theology yields certain ideas. What it does not do is to prove that an object corresponding to those ideas actually exists. I have no doubt that some of the arguments are persuasive enough to make belief in God intellectually respectable. They may even help clarify and refine our ideas of God. Many quite uncouth and superstititious ideas have been popular; I am afraid some still are. I hope the divine being shall come to be conceived more and more in line with the ideas yielded by rational theology. But our ideas of how the divine being shall come to be conceived do not demonstrate his actual existence. They assume it. They simply show how God should be thought of *if* he exists.

What I have been saying is really a commonplace. Spiritual teachers have repeatedly said that spiritual things are spiritually discerned. Arguments regarding the divine being are not what religion

is founded upon. The gifts of many spiritual teachers have run in channels remote from philosophical argumentation. Religion is founded upon man's inner discernment of the divine being. Religion consists of the cultivation of fellowship with the divine being. It is for this that religious observances are maintained. To say there is no such thing as fellowship with the divine being sounds just silly to spiritual teachers. It is the "fool", wrote the Psalmist, who says in his heart, "there is no God". According to Jesus, it is a kind of wilful blindness. According to Paul, what is known of God is manifest in us. Religious faith, as President Eisenhower seems fond of saying, is something "deeply felt". This experience is of its own kind, *sui generis*. It is because people have an experience of God that religious observances exist to express and cultivate it. Some people may think they do not have it, but these are the last people in a position to say that nobody else has. Normally, the divine is in the background at least of every human consciousness, and religion is the open recognition of it.

Prayer - After Easter

Almighty Father, in whose will is our peace: we thank thee for the fidelity of our Master who did not fail in life's supreme test. Give us grace to make thy will our own, and courage to go forward, obedient unto thee, whatever thou dost command. Grant us the spiritual vision which filled the mind of our Master, and may we share his faith in Life's creative power.

Help us, O God, to lift our eyes from the symbol of mortality, and to set our hearts upon the life which knows no end, thy life within us. Help us to pray with a living faith that thy kingdom may come in the earth, and thy will be done among men as it is in the heavens. And may no earthly tragedy shake that radiant faith.

Grant us the consciousness of the presence of the Spirit of the Eternal God within our spirits. Give us the serenity which comes of knowing that, if our earthly house be dissolved, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. AMEN.

NOTICE TO MEMBERS

The nominations for officers of the Unitarian Christian Fellowship for the fiscal year beginning May 1, 1954 presented by the Nominating Committee are as follows:

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President
Rev. Amos B. Horlacher

1st Vice-President
Rev. Paul H. Chapman

2nd Vice-President
Mrs. Herbert Lyman

3rd Vice-President
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Constant Wendell

Directors for three years
Rev. Charles C. Forman
Mrs. Berkeley Wheeler

It is provided that "Other nominations may be made by fifteen members provided the same are filed with the Secretary on or before March 30th."

Rev. Paul Harmon Chapman,
Corresponding Secretary
56 Crescent Street,
Greenfield, Mass.

Nominating Committee:
Rev. Paul H. Chapman
Chairman
Rev. Carl Bihldorff
Marshall G. Stone
Miss Frances R. Porter
Constant Wendell

THE LIBERAL CHRISTIAN IS CHALLENGED

By Rev. Charles E. Park, D.D., Editor-in-Chief, Unitarian Christian

Jesus had several habits of talking and teaching, such as his constant use of parables, and his fondness for hyperbole. He tells us to ask, and seek, and knock, and fear not, and believe, and have faith, and love much, and forgive; but he leaves us uninstructed as to just what it is that we are to ask and seek and fear not and believe and love and forgive. He is more interested in the act than in any specific result that may follow the act.

We may safely surmise that his attention is fixed more upon the man, his personal temper and disposition, than upon what the man does or achieves. Such a surmise points to a solicitude in him which is quite in character. To him the important thing is the quality of the man himself.

When Martin Luther hurled his ink pot at the Devil his act was capable of producing two results: first, the immediate result of hitting the Devil and driving him out of the room. Second, the deferred result of making Martin Luther a better shot with ink pots, whom the Devil will not molest. As a matter of fact, he missed the Devil entirely, for there was no Devil present, only Luther's immaterial vision. But he did make himself a better Martin Luther. That deferred result would have seemed to Jesus far and away the richer and more preferable one.

The athlete in the gymnasium pulls his chest weights for no conceivable outward result, (for who cares whether the chest weight is up, or down, or stuck in the middle?) but solely for the inward deferred result, — to harden his own muscles and toughen his own sinews. Apparently Jesus looked upon his present age as simply an age of preparation for the age to come, when the Kingdom of God should be established "on earth as it is in heaven". He saw that a great deal of preparation was necessary. The Kingdom would never come unless it was wanted far more sincerely and generally than it was at the time. Even if it should come it would not last a week, unless it was composed of a far higher type of citizens than he saw about him. The preparation most needed was beyond question a preparation of self. Hence his emphasis. The world is a spiritual gymnasium. Use its occasions for the development of your own spiritual muscles and sinews. Learn to aspire. What you aspire unto is of secondary importance, so long as it teaches you what aspiration is, and how to exercise it. Learn to have faith, and to believe, and to fear not, and to forgive. The concrete objects will reveal themselves in the course of your self-development. You can always have faith that there is something that you can have faith in. You can always believe that there is something worthy of your belief. If you want good apples, the first step is to have a vigorous tree capable of bearing good apples. Make yourself that kind of tree; the apples will come automatically.

All this is so modern and timely that it makes us wince. We are all talking and longing and hoping for a greater cohesion in our world, in our religious life, especially in our American Christianity, to bring peace, and effective co-operation, and an over-all unity of high purpose among our discordant sects and denominations. Suppose this should come by Divine Mandate, an "act of God"; how long would it last? How long before we ourselves would begin to say: We cannot co-operate with these people. They believe in the absolute infallibility of the Bible, divinely inspired, true in every word. They worship a Personal God, who governs each event of life by a series of special providences.

True enough; but what difference does it make what they believe so long as they are believing people; so long as they believe with all their might? What difference does it make whom they worship, so long as they are worshipping people who do worship sincerely, reverently, to the last drop of their blood?

It is a challenge to Liberal Christians. But they can do it only by first making themselves that kind of men and women, big-minded and big-hearted enough to feel their kinship with all others of the same quality and caliber "whate'er their name or sign", and make that recognition the basis of their union.

IMMORTALITY: A CURRENT APPETITE

By Rev. Alexander Szent-Ivanyi, D.D., Unitarian Church, Lancaster, Mass.

The "cry of the age" is growing thunderous in our days, urging "Theology to catch up with reality". Theology is not welcome, even as a guest, among religious liberals of today; they have long substituted Anthropology for it. Be it Anthropology though that too has to catch up with reality. Reality, anthropologically speaking, means the dominant trend in a culture, the way the majority thinks and behaves. This definition of reality may sound untrue. The prophets and martyrs did not seem to care what the majority of their contemporaries thought in matters of religion and morals. They knew better. As a matter of fact, they were prophets, and often became martyrs exactly because they disagreed with the majority of their contemporaries. Even such an honest, and almost contemporary thinker as H. G. Wells felt that the "bright ideas of today are the realities of tomorrow". Meaning that the bright ideas of individual thinkers will be accepted by the majority of people, and thereby become the realities of tomorrow. (That the realities meant majority thinking and behaving, he also accepted as true). Today Wells would have to reverse his statement: "The realities of today are the bright ideas of tomorrow". For we live in the "century of the masses", our Social Science is convinced that "social systems which endure are built on the average person", and that "individual talent is too sporadic and unpredictable to be allowed any important part in the organization of society"; our psychology has only one definition for the normal person, namely that he is the average person, the majority; our ethics regards the prevalence in morals, the way the majority behaves, as the basis for any ethical criterion; and our Science of Religion (?) takes the religious appetite of the contemporaries for its "seat of authority in religion".

For evidence, one can turn first of all, to the societies which have been brought up in "militant atheism", to the Soviet Socialist Republic of Russia, and to the People's Democrasies of the satellites. According to authorized news agencies, Malenkov, wanting to find out about public opinion at first hand, walked around in the streets of Moscow disguised. He came to a church, entered it, and found there a typical old woman, the "little woman" of Russia whom everybody calls endearingly: "Baboushka". "Whom are you praying for, Baboushka?" inquired the disguised Malenkov. "For the Soviet Socialist Republic and Number One, (Malenkov) Comrade", was the answer. "Do you believe your prayer has any effect?" asked Malenkov further. "I know it has, Comrade", answered Baboushka, adding with a twinkle in her eyes: "You see, I used to pray for — Beria also". The significance of this anecdote, and that it is being repeated over and over again, is clear to all analysts of the Soviet life. Adding it to the many other signs of change in the "religious appetite", or rather "ideological appetite" of the Soviet Man, it tells us that God, who once was pronounced non-existent, now lives in the imagination of the people. It is a God of vengeance they are thinking of at present, and understandably so, but also a God of power whom one has to take into account.

Not having space further to elaborate, let me quote another anecdote, without humor this time, also told by Russians returning to their stations in the satellite world. Why Beria was not taken to court in the typical "shop-window trials" of his predecessors. Because after many weeks of torture, Malenkov visited Beria in his cell and offered him painless death if he would behave according to directions in court. Beria declined. "The tortures you can order committed on me", he said, "I know. Many of them I invented myself. All of them I saw practised innumerable times. The tortures that await me over there (after death) I do not know. Of these latter I am more afraid than the former".

The "lonely crowd", lonely because betrayed, is finding solace in the idea of a Divine Companion, a Judge, but also a Comforter. The example of a Stalin dying peacefully, or at any rate, quickly in the Kremlin Hospital, without suffering for his evil deeds, is unacceptable to that "racial" unconscious", that timeless yearning for justice which thirty-six years of militant atheism was not able to change or exterminate.

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